CHILDREN'S BOOK
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CHRISTMAS

HOLIDAYS;

OR,

A VISIT AT HOME.

Written for the American Sunday School Union.

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CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS;

OR,

A VISIT AT HOME.

A mother's hand the tottering step must guide,
Her breast the pillow where the infant lies,
And heaven, who gave the precious boon, designed
That she should train her infant for the skies.

The stage coach stopped at the door of the Academy in Abington, an hour later than the expected time, and Howard and George Barrington ran forward with eagerness, as school boys are wont to do, when they are going from a retired part of the country into the city, at the Christmas Holidays.

The stage passed rapidly along the fine turnpike road; and at dusk the blowing of the horn announced their near approach to the great city; soon the coachman's whip was thrown on the top of the vehicle, a loud ring at the door of their father's mansion was answered by the servant in waiting; the boys beheld the cheerful lighted hall, and were soon locked in the arms of their parents and sisters, who ran out of the parlour to receive them. The parlour too was lighted, not only

with lamps, but by a blazing hickory fire, for it was a cold, frosty evening, toward the end of December. "What kept you so late?" said Emma to her brother George, whose hand she still held. "I believe," said he, "we were not longer than usual in coming, but the stage did not leave Abington for an hour after the appointed time; it was waiting for passengers, and was very much crowded." "I thought you would never come," said Emma.

Howard, who had been in earnest conversation with his mother, now turned to George, and said, "Did you not feel sorry for poor John when he found he could not get into the coach? I really pitied him, for he was just as eager to go as we were; and I could not help thinking what a disappointment it would be to his parents, who, no doubt, were looking out as anxiously for him, as our parents were for us." "O, don't think about it, Howard," said George, "I dare say he'll get down to-morrow, and that will do as well."

Before we proceed, we will give the reader a little insight into the characters of these boys: Howard, the eldest, (who was named after the great philanthropist of that name,) was twelve years old, slender and delicately

formed; his capacity was good, his disposition amiable and obliging, and his school mates called him the finest fellow in the world. He possessed, indeed, genuine sensibility; that sensibility which feels the misfortunes of others, as well as its own sorrows. This latter quality, though a lovely one, subjected him to a great many trials; and one of the objects his judicious mother had in view in sending him from home, was to counteract this tendency to morbid feeling; she did not wish to crush the beautiful germs, which, if properly directed, might at some future period, make him the benefactor of mankind; but she wanted his strength of mind to keep pace with his benevolent feelings, and she found, the only way to accomplish this, was to throw him upon his oars, (to use a sea phrase,) and compel him to think and act in a great measure for himself. The school and the family provided for him, were every way unexceptionable. The teacher was a clergyman, past the middle of life, of exemplary piety, one who possessed great suavity of manners, and who had the happy faculty of attaching his pupils to him in an extraordinary degree. He was made acquainted with Howard's peculiar temper, and suited himself to it; treat-

ing him with great kindness, yet, with that firmness he so much required.

George Washington, called after the beloved father of our country, was almost the opposite of his brother; yet we will not take away from him the commendation he deserves, for he too had his good qualities, and at ten years old, was called by most folks, a smart and brave fellow. He was short and chubby, with the promise of very good talents; bold and daring, and of a quick, passionate temper, which continually wanted a curb. His parents had early been aware of this, and by discreet management, had so far kept him under complete control. When out of their sight, however, he would sometimes *break out*, and *get into scrapes;* his brother was then his refuge, for the respect shown to him, even at this tender age, generally ensured peace, and the culprit was forgiven.

Providence, who is ever watchful over the affairs of life, apparently designed these lads to be blessings to each other. If George was sometimes betrayed into rashness by the boldness of his nature, the same confidence was exerted to raise his brother from his desponding fits, as he laughingly termed the tenderness Howard discovered for the human woes he felt, or saw around him.

After greetings all round had taken place, and the domestics also had welcomed their young masters home, the tea-table was set out; and George, who was generally on the look out for something good, saw to his great pleasure, a nice plum cake placed in the middle of the table. It was Mrs. Barrington's desire to make her children happy. She did not approve of giving them luxuries at all times, because health is best promoted by plain food, but *at this time,* she thought she might innocently allow them a few indulgencies, as her circumstances in life were affluent, and she was not compelled to rob the poor, in order to afford her children the gratification. They were soon seated at the tea-table. Emma and the two little ones were permitted on this evening to join the group, in honour of the arrival of their brothers. They were two sweet cherub-looking children; the one three years old, had a very fair complexion, and glossy flaxen hair, which hung in curls on her little shoulders,—and such is the effect of habit, or imitation, that the moment she was placed at table, she put her little hands on it, closed her soft blue eyes, and was ready for the blessing her father was to ask; never was there a sweeter picture of innocent love-

liness: the young folks had a great deal of merry chit-chat round the table; after the tea things were removed, the two younger children were sent to bed—Emma remained an hour longer.—Mamma then directed the servant to place the table nearer the fire, and to add fresh fuel to it—the green cloth was then thrown over the table, the newspapers were placed on it for papa, and sewing materials, and interesting books for the rest of the party. They were tolerably quiet, while papa was reading, only now and then George would forget that he was not in the woods at Abington, and Emma would whisper a few words in his ear, which would make him laugh out. Soon, however, Dr. Barrington went into his office, a very neat room, which adjoined the parlour. The children tenderly loved their father, yet they were not sorry to see him go away for a little while; the respect they likewise felt for him, did not produce restraint; but yet they were generally rather silent when he was present, because they could not bear to interrupt him. They knew his mind was almost always engaged with some important duty. He was a physician, and in truth, even the few hours he gave to domestic enjoyment, were not without their

cares: when surrounded by an attractive circle, which his reputation had drawn around him, he was oftentimes compelled to think deeply: he was responsible for the lives of his fellow creatures, and was conscientious in the discharge of every duty to them. After he withdrew, their little tongues were all in motion. "Come, come, my children," said Mrs. B., "it is my turn to be speaker now;" a cry of hush! hush! went round, and soon they were all mum. Mamma then addressed them, "I have been thinking, my dear boys, and Emma too, what Christmas box I should get for you. Your father and myself were talking over this weighty matter before you came home, intending to surprise you; he, however, thought it best, as you are all now of an age to have some judgment of your own, to let you choose for yourselves." "And me too, mamma?" said little Emma. "Yes, my dear," said her mother, "you will go with your brothers, and Howard, if not George, can surely advise you." Dear, dear mamma, vociferated the trio, how good you are! and will you give us the money in our own hands, cried Emma? At that moment she drew from her reticule a nice purse, and presented each of them with

a beautiful new bank note. Their father had sent to the bank for them that day, on purpose to have them fresh; but mamma said to little Emma, after she had sufficiently admired her possession, now, my dear, as you are a little girl, you had better let Howard take care of your treasure, till the purchase is about to be made. She did as she was requested to do, and then a debating took place. Many articles were named for the purchase, but for some, the sum was too little, and others would not cost so much. In this state they went to bed, to dream of every thing delightful. As they were leaving the apartment, after having affectionately bade their mother good night, she called to them, and said, "now remember, my dear children, you have but one day more to decide upon your purchase before Christmas, and remember too, you must think well, before you decide; and after you have fixed upon the articles you intend to buy, you must not change your mind. It must also be all concluded upon before you go to the shops, so that you may not give unnecessary trouble, and expose yourselves, as many little boys do, who cannot make up their minds. I would be pleased too, if you would talk the matter over

among yourselves, and appeal neither to your father nor myself for advice. They promised to do all their mother advised, and retired.

They had sweet dreams, as may be supposed, and appeared at the breakfast table the next morning, with fresh blooming complexions, and countenances full of meaning. This was an eventful day to them. They behaved very well considering all things; but George found it difficult to keep the interesting subject out of sight; and Emma would every now and then, put her head close to his, and whisper something in his ear. Howard would cast a significant look across the table, and father and mother could not but smile. In truth, these good parents were as happy as any king or queen, nay, far happier; for monarchs seldom feel the delights which spring from the social affections.

Dinner time now came round, the party were on *tip-toe*. As they all took their seats, Mrs. Barrington looked at them with much earnestness. She thought she discerned a little anxiety on Howard's brow, and George seemed restive. But this might arise from impatience to be out; it was three o'clock, and they would have but two hours before sunset. She, however, took no notice of this, but

bidding the servant hasten the desert, she told them they might withdraw in a few minutes, without waiting, as was their custom, till the cloth was removed,—away they flew, were soon coated, and sallied forth.

The grand decision was made; they went to a number of shops—made their purchases, and just as it began to grow dark, they rang at the hall door, in high glee. Mrs. Barrington was seated on the sofa in the drawing room, when the door opened, and Emma first made her appearance, holding behind her a beautiful red morocco work box, which she produced as soon as she came near her mother. "See, mamma," said she, "this was Howard's choice; he thought it would be more useful than any toy: and I think, mamma, I shall be able to keep it a great while; see, it has thimble, scissors, needle case, and all in it." "Yes, it is very complete," said her mamma, "and very well chosen, for it is plain, and strongly made: now, if it only encourages you to be industrious, I shall be rejoiced." "O yes, mamma," said Emma, "I mean to begin to hem your cambrick handkerchiefs, this very evening, and will furnish my pretty box with needles, pins, cotton balls, &c." Just at this moment in came Howard

and George, and Mrs. B. could scarce refrain from laughing; the mingled sensations at the same time affected her, when the latter, with a military air, marched in, with his small barrelled gun, saying, now I can be a sportsman, and by next Christmas, mother, you shall have as fine a brace of partridges as ever graced a gentleman's table, or if you like them better, wood-cocks, or pheasants, or reed-birds; I dare say you will like them the best, they are so delicate. Mother, you look grave, said the sprightly boy; why it is not worth while, for I'm sure both General Washington and General La Fayette, handled a gun before they were my age, or else they never would have known how to frighten the British so; come, cheer up mother, may be I may be a General some of these days.

The gun was only moderately commended; it was very good of its kind, his father said, (who by this time had come into the parlour to witness the scene,) and not a dear purchase; but Mrs. Barrington did not like to see it in George's hand; she would not have felt so much fear had it belonged to Howard. However, the purchase was now made; she had told them they must not change their minds after once deciding; so nothing more

could be done at present; but she intended making an appeal to his feelings when he returned into the country, and she hoped this would be regarded.

"Why don't you take out your pretty books," said Emma to Howard, as he stood looking at the gun, with very much the same train of thought as that which agitated his mother. With that he took from his coat pocket two very neat volumes, and handed them to his mother; one was a very good edition of Walker's Dictionary, the other a neat pocket edition of The New Testament. He coloured as she opened this, and with his usual timidity, turned away. He had stepped into his father's office, and that was the reason why he and George did not enter the parlour with Emma, that he might write in the title page of his Testament, "*A Christmas gift from my dear mother*, may her son derive profit from the perusal of it, that he may become a blessing to her." When she saw these lines, tears started to her eyes; and an involuntary ejaculation of, "Heaven bless you, my son," escaped from her lips. You have done well, she replied. O that is not all yet, exclaimed little Emma. No, said George, for the gentleman at the Sunday School Book-

store seemed so pleased with him, that he allowed him to take the books at such a low price, that he had almost a dollar left. Saying this, he ran behind Howard, and drew from his coat pocket, a striped woollen jacket. Here the party laughed aloud. Dr. Barrington, who seemed to enjoy the frolic, said, why here is a sailor's jacket, but where are the trowsers and hat? are you going, my dear boy, to turn sailor upon our hands?

Howard's feelings were by this time, a little touched; and George took upon himself, to clear up the mystery of the yellow jacket. Howard, he said, had from the first, wanted to get something for poor Tom Sanders, who lives near our school: and sometimes he thought he would lay out all his money for him, he looked so ragged and distressed the day before we came away. But he had wished for a great while, to have a small Testament of his own, beside his school Testament, that he could carry in his pocket, and he thought if he had it, he could sometimes between school hours run through the woods to the house of Tom's father and mother, who were poor wretched creatures, and by this means be of some service to them and Tom too; and the Dictionary he thought he

could scarcely do without, but he had given this up, intending to lay out what he had left after buying the Testament, for poor Tom: but the gentleman let him have the Dictionary so cheap, that he found he could get the jacket too. So we stopped at a shop and got it. Dr. B's. eyes beamed with pleasure, and Mrs. B. felt as if she could have taken Howard to her arms. "My son, you have done well," exclaimed the father, "and Tom shall have a pair of trowsers to suit the jacket." "O, shall he," says he, "then, dear father, I'll run now and get them." "No, my dear, you are fatigued. It is beside, snowing fast. Harry shall go early in the morning, before you are up; very little choice is required." "He may take the jacket with him, father, may he not," said Howard; "for Tom will be as well pleased to have them alike, as I should be. And father, do you think we could get the stage driver to take them to-morrow, so that he might put them on *on Christmas day?*" "Harry shall go with a request from your mother, and I have no doubt he will take them."

Mrs. Barrington at the same time gave

them in charge to the man servant, and added a nice fat little turkey, for the poor family. When Howard saw this, he felt that his mother was good indeed, to gratify him so highly: the next day, they were all despatched in time to reach the house of Tom's father, at a very early hour. So that Tom had the comfort of his new clothes on *Christmas day*, and the family had as good a dinner as their richer neighbours. When the stage stopped at the door of the cabin, and the driver handed out the bundle, Tom's surprise was so great at first that he could not speak; but he ran in to his mother, exclaiming, "only look mammy, what master Howard has sent us. Here's a jacket and trowsers for me, and here's a turkey for you and father!"

But we must return to the parlour in town. Christmas eve now came, and with it a small company, consisting of the children of persons, with whom Dr. and Mrs. B. were particularly acquainted, and beside them their cousins. Mrs. B. loved to encourage social feelings in her children, and during holiday times would treat them to some of these parties. It was her desire that all belonging to her family should be united in love, and an affectionate regard for each other; this

she knew could not be the case unless they were brought frequently together: and as her boys were absent the greater part of the year, she embraced the opportunity of school vacations, to give them, not a dance, not a supper table covered with all the luxuries of the season—she could not bear to see children gormandize, as eating immoderately is called; her object was to bring them together, and make them happy in a rational way.

She interested herself on such occasions, in composing for them puzzles, which had infolded in them, some moral or religious precept: she treated them to apples, nuts, and sugar plums, and nice cakes; but then, these were the least part of the entertainment. She never left them to themselves to romp and disturb the neighbours with their noise; but would remain with them, to moderate the buoyancy of their spirits, and direct them in their innocent sports. She would once or twice during the evening, gather them around the table, and play teacher, while they were her scholars. This would lead to many useful questions and answers, and it must have been a very stupid child, who would go away without some in-

struction. Nine o'clock was the hour she fixed, for the young people to separate, and they seldom infringed upon these limits. Mrs. B. was so much respected and beloved by all young folks, that whatever she said was a law to them.

Christmas day was bright and clear; the children were in fine spirits, and their parents happy in seeing them so.

In the evening, when all was still, when the table was drawn close beside a good fire, when the curtains were closed, and Mrs. B. was seated in the corner of the sofa which she usually occupied, with her four children around her, the following dialogue commenced.

I believe all my children, except little Mary, know why this is called *Christmas day*. "And I know too, mamma," said a little girl, of six years old: "do you dear," said her mother, "then you shall tell me why?" "I have heard you tell my brothers and Emma that Christ was supposed to be born on that day." "That is right, and you are a good girl, for noticing, and remembering my instructions. Emma, can you tell me where he was born?" "In the town of Bethlehem, in the country of Judea." "Can you tell me any

of the circumstances which attended his birth, George?" "He was born in a stable, because there was no room for him in the inn: and he was wrapt in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger." "When we think," said Mrs. Barrington, "that the Lord of heaven and earth was born in a stable, should it not make us thankful, that he has provided more comfortable accommodations for us? It should also teach us humility, when we consider, that we are in comparison but worms of the dust; and that it is his goodness which supplies us with every thing needful to shelter and comfort us." "Mamma," said Emma, "what do you mean by humility?" "That we should not pride ourselves on what we possess, because we know that it is all given to us by God, or rather lent to us, as long as he chooses we should have it. For the Scriptures, which are the word of truth, say, that 'the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.' To be humble is to be meek, not thinking ourselves better than others. You know Mr. Eastburne; I call him an humble man, he is lowly minded, and meek, and is constantly going about following the example of his Saviour, doing good to every one. Yet he never talks about himself, or what he

has done; and if you would meet him without knowing who he was, you would, from his appearance, think he had no pretensions to the character he has obtained; he is so unostentatious, and so *humble*, that to learn something of him, you would have to go to the house of the sick person he has been visiting, or the poor family for whom he is interesting himself, not only occasionally, but almost every day of his life."

"How delightful it must be to have such a character, to be so good, and so humble, Mamma," said Howard. "Yes, my child, and all may be so if they endeavour to keep the commandments of God, and ask his blessing on the endeavour. Howard, it is now your turn to answer. Can you tell me the object of our Saviour's birth?" "He came to save all mankind from their sins, all that would repent, and believe." "Were the parents of Jesus living at Bethlehem, at the time of his birth?" "No, mamma, they were living at Nazareth, a town in Galilee, but Augustus the Roman Emperor, made a decree, that all the world should be taxed, and that every one must go to his own city for this purpose. Now Joseph and Mary, the parents of Jesus, the Scriptures say, belonged to the

lineage of David, and Bethlehem was the city of David, and they went there to be taxed, just before our Saviour's birth." "Do you understand, my dear Howard, what is meant by the word *lineage*, and what was understood by their being taxed at this time?" "Not perfectly, will you explain it to me, mamma?" "The lineage, or *line of David*, which is the common expression, as applied to Joseph and Mary, mean that they belonged to his family. Many hundred years before Christ was born, the Prophet Isaiah, a man who was inspired by God, predicted in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, that Christ would be born of one of the descendants of this family, that is of the *line* or family of David, and that he would be born in Bethlehem, the city to which David's family belonged, and here it was they came to be taxed, although they had been living at Nazareth, a distance of sixty or seventy miles from Bethlehem. Augustus had issued a decree, or law, that an account should be taken of the number, and situations, of all the subjects, or persons, in his vast empire, which from ostentation he called *all the world*, because it contained the best, and most civilized, and cultivated countries then

known, this was the second decree he had sent out, and so many persons had they to number, and register or put down in a book, that they were three years before they came to Bethlehem. At this time, only their names were taken; they were not required to pay any thing till twelve years after: when they did pay, it was for the support of the kingdom, to enrich it, and enable its monarchs to live in splendour. Taxing is lawful, when the money, or other things required, is not so much as to bear heavily on the poor, who are not able to bear it. Our Saviour sanctions it, when he says, 'render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's.' But it has been carried so far, under despotic governments, and even in countries, which at this day we have constant intercourse with, that it is melancholy even to think of the distress it has occasioned the poor; who at some seasons, have scarce been able to get bread enough to keep them from starving." "Thank you, mamma, I shall endeavour to remember what you have told me."

"George, can you tell me how the birth of our Saviour became known?"—"Did not the shepherds tell it to all they met, mamma."

"Yes, my dear, but how did they know it?" "Angels," said Howard, "told it to them:—they were watching their flocks, at night, to keep them from the wolves." "Would you not think it hard to be out on a winter's night, Howard?" "I should not have suffered so much there, as here; the climate is so much warmer." "But, I think," said Mrs. B. "you said the shepherds were watching their flocks?"—"Yes, mamma, and while they were watching, an angel appeared to them: they were frightened at first, but the angel told them not to be afraid." "Cannot you repeat the passage of Scripture?" "Yes, mamma, it is in the 2nd chapter of St. Luke, and the 10th and 11th verses:—'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people: for unto you is born, this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.'" "Do you recollect what took place after this?" "The shepherds exceedingly rejoiced, and went to Bethlehem where they found the Babe, with his father and mother; precisely in the situation which had been foretold; the shepherds then told the great news to all they knew." "Do you recollect, Howard, what is said of Simeon, a devout man, who is

spoken of, in the 2nd chapter of Luke, which records the nativity, or birth of our Saviour?"

"When the parents of Jesus brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, and offer a sacrifice for him, which the law required, Simeon was dwelling at Jerusalem, —but, mamma, I would rather hear you relate this."

"You were right, so far, my dear: Simeon was a believer in Christ when he was yet unborn;—he had studied the prophets of the old Testament, and as the Scripture says, 'he was waiting for *the consolation of Israel*,' that meant, to *see Christ;* for it had been revealed to him that he should not see death, until he had seen the Lord's Christ

"When the young child was brought into the temple, Simeon, it is said, was led by the Spirit to go there. George, do you repeat what the good old man said, when his eyes beheld the Babe of Bethlehem, as our infant Saviour was called."

"I will try, mamma: he took him up in his arms, and blessed God, saying, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'" "The Scriptures have said that when Jesus was taken into the temple,

the law required that a sacrifice or offering should be made for him,—what was this offering?" "A pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons." "Yes, my dear, the Jewish law made it necessary to bring an offering for every male child. The more wealthy among them, gave a lamb of the first year, and it shows how poor the parents of Jesus were, that they were able to offer only a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons. When you are a little older, my dear children, you will be better able to comprehend the full meaning of a sacrifice or offering, and the connexion they had with the great sacrifice of himself, which our blessed Saviour made for sinful creatures such as we are.

"What do you know, Howard, of the wise men who came from the east in search of the Babe of Bethlehem?" "They came to Jerusalem first." "Did they remain there?" "No:—they told Herod, the king of Judea, that Christ was born, for they had seen his star in the east." "Do you know what they meant by that?" "Do you tell us, mamma." "It was at that time believed throughout all the *East*, that some very extraordinary person was to arise in Judea. The belief was

founded on their having some knowledge of the writings of the ancient prophets; and from the Jews themselves, who were scattered over all the eastern countries. Many persons suppose these *wise men* lived in Persia, a country a great deal further to the east than Jerusalem. About the time they expected this great personage to appear, they saw a very shining, or luminous appearance in the sky, which induced them to take this very long journey. They thought by going to Jerusalem first, they should certainly hear every thing which had occurred." "But, mamma," said George, "I thought Herod did not know that Jesus was born." "You are right:—he was kept in ignorance of it, because God knew that he was a wicked king, and would destroy the young child, in order to keep him from reigning as a temporal king, as they supposed he would do, and by this means overturn the Roman empire: the wise men were warned of this, and seeing the same light or star, which they saw in their own country, they followed it, till it stood just over the house where the young child lay; for, by this time, his parents had found better accommodations for him, than the poor stable in which he was born. The scriptural re-

lation is so beautiful, I will turn to it, and read it to you, or, George, you may find the place in the 2nd chapter of the gospel of Matthew. 'When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child, and Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him; and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.'" "Was not Herod very angry when he found the wise men did not return through Jerusalem, as he expected they would?" "Yes, he was indeed: and, in consequence of this, and that he might certainly destroy the infant Saviour, he caused all the young children, of two years of age, and all under this age, to be destroyed. But God did not allow him to succeed; for he sent the parents of Jesus, with the young child, into another country, out of Herod's reach; so that he escaped, when many other poor children were cut off. A beautiful account is given of this blessed child, in the 2nd chapter of Luke, and the 2nd chapter of Matthew.

"His parents were in the habit of going up to Jerusalem once a year, to the feast of the

passover, an ordinance which I will explain to you when you are older. It was customary for children to go with their parents to this feast; and Jesus went with Joseph, and Mary his mother, for he was, at that time, twelve years old. A very interesting incident occurred, when his father and mother left the temple. But I wish each of you to read one of the chapters I have mentioned. I have been endeavouring to explain them to you, and I hope you will now understand them."

After they had read these scriptures, the children all joined in a hymn, which their mother had composed for the day, and then retired with her blessing.

The joyful hour again returns,
  Let mortals prostrate fall;
For lo! this day the angel bands
  Have crown'd thee Lord of all.

From morning light, till evening shade,
  Thy glorious name we'll sing;
And nations shall proclaim the birth
  Of our exalted king.

Let meek devotion's sacred power
  Shed round her sweet perfume;
While in thy consecrated courts
  We hail the blessing come.

Then let our hearts be tuned to praise;
Let purest incense rise
From altars builded by thine hands,
Our hearts the sacrifice.

Loud hallelujahs let us raise;
While at thy feet we fall:
This day, behold! the angel band
Have crown'd thee Lord of all.

Every day of the following week was passed among their relatives, till the last day of the old year arrived. The boys had then but one day to remain at home; and on this day the rain poured down in torrents. To a reflecting mind, there is something in this period, which fills the heart with a tender sorrow; the youthful party, however, were as yet strangers to any great concern either for the past or future. Howard alone began to feel; his mind was unusually matured, for one of his age; and his character resembled his mother's in many respects; an extreme delicacy of sentiment marked all his thoughts —and an intuitive sense of pain his actions: he never witnessed the dejection of another, but he was sure to imbibe a portion of their grief. The indigent widows who were his mother's pensioners, had always a ready friend in him; and from quite a little child,

he never beheld a poor ragged boy or girl, that he did not wish to give them some of his little clothes:—and one day, seeing a poor beggar come into the hall, he ran before any one was aware of it, and took from the side-board, a loaf of bread, and carrying it in his little apron, threw it into the beggar's lap. This disposition continued, and now in his twelfth year, he is constantly doing little acts of kindness to all within his reach. Is it to be wondered at, that such a boy, ensures to himself the good will of all who know him?

At length *New Year's* day came: this was passed at home, with uncles, and aunts, and cousins, a goodly number. After the day was over, and the guests had all returned to their homes, Howard and George lingered round the fire, and their mother took the opportunity to give them directions for their conduct during the *New Year*, upon which they had entered. It was such advice, as every pious, and judicious parent, should give to her sons, when on the eve of parting from them. She bade them call to mind the past year, and think how often they had offended against God; how many times they had broken his commandments; how often

they had acted contrary to the advice of their parents, and teachers, by breaking the Sabbath, and by other acts of folly; which, however trivial *in their eyes*, would not be overlooked by God, "who is the searcher of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

In this manner the hours wore away, and bed time arrived; the trunks were already packed to be ready for the morning stage, which was to convey the boys back to the school, twelve miles distant from town: next morning, a loud rap at the door of their sleeping apartment, aroused Howard and George, from most delicious slumbers; and the bright sun darting his beams into the windows, admonished them to arise.

Breakfast being over, and the trunks in readiness in the hall, Harry was summoned: after loitering, and holding mamma by the hand as long as she would permit them, the boys gave her a hasty kiss, and ran out of the parlour into Dr. Barrington's office—and embracing him, were off. Harry followed with the trunks, and they were shortly seated in the very same *stage-coach*, which, the week before, had brought them to town. Howard's eyes were suffused with tears, and George looked grave. They however began

to think of all the pleasures they had enjoyed. George pleased himself with the thought of how much he would have to tell the boys at school; and Howard thought, if the next day should be clear, he would walk over to old Squire Hobson's farm, and see his poor tenant, William Jones, who was in a deep decline. He had his pocket full of medicines for him, that the Doctor had recommended, but which he was too poor to purchase. These his father had allowed him to take from his own stock that he always kept for the indigent. Howard had beside, a large roll of flannel in his trunk, which his mamma had placed there for William Jones's two youngest children; and Howard also thought to himself, how sweet it will be to carry my nice *New Testament* to the farmer's, and read to poor William.

The stage now stopped at the door of the village pastor's house; and the next morning the boys entered upon their studies, in the school-room adjoining: nor were they unmindful of that God to whom their mother had directed their thoughts, *as the source of all their blessings for time and eternity.*

C.

THE END.

ADRIAN

Miss Lucy
Miss Lucy
Miss Lucy

Miss Lucy
Miss Lucy
Miss Lucy